Application for

NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2026

Christian Anker

3rd year PhD

In Strategic Management

with

BI Norwegian Business School

Department of Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation

Bio Summary

Name: Christian Anker

Nationality: Norwegian

Location: Oslo, Norway

Email: Christian.anker@bi.no

Phone: 0047 97002668

School: BI Norwegian Business School

Department: Department of Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation

PhD start: 2023

PhD end: 2027

Current year: 3rd year of PhD

PhD field: Strategic Management

Faculty member supplying a letter of recommendation: Supervisor Sheryl Winston Smith

Background & Research Interest & Reason To Attend Bootcamp

I am writing to express my interest in attending the 2026 NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp. I am currently a third-year PhD Candidate in Strategic Management at BI Norwegian Business School. Having completed all coursework and teaching requirements, I am now dedicated to my dissertation. My supervisor, Sheryl Winston Smith, highly recommended this program as an ideal environment to refine my research and get new impulses during this phase of my doctoral studies.

My drive comes from a deep curiosity about how the world works. For me, research is a privilege and an opportunity to explore. I view myself as a quantitative scholar. My research investigates the intersection of venture capital, startups, and accelerator programs, using the Pitchbook Inc. deal-level data. With my first paper, I want to understand the industry's inner workings and how they are shifting post the COVID-19 pandemic, and in my second paper, the changes they face with artificial intelligence, as both the demand for risk capital and the supply of it are affected. My third paper is yet to be determined, and I hope the boot camp can help. Both investing in startups and the creation of them are of interest to me.

I wish to attend the boot camp to engage with leading scholars who are shaping the field of entrepreneurship. The opportunity to learn from Kevin Bryan and Kyle Myers would be valuable. Given my focus on high-growth entrepreneurship and innovation, the boot camp's curriculum aligns well with my thesis. As I transition toward finalizing my dissertation, both the feedback and the exposure to the NBER network could significantly enhance the quality of my work.

Before and during my time in academia, I have professional experience with corporate strategy, investments, and entrepreneurial endeavors stemming from my roles as owner-operator of several businesses tied to my family and myself. We used to be a family business but are now more of a business family running several distinct operations. Running business, allocating capital, and managing risk, and the many different activities those jobs require, are what we do – and both my mother and father's families have done so for generations here in Scandinavia. My role is split and requires me to also start new ventures to keep the entrepreneurial capabilities alive. What I learn from my PhD work serves me in business, and what business has taught me is serving my PhD work.

Thank you for reading my application and considering me for the boot camp. I believe I can be a valuable contributor to group discussions. For the record, I am applying to both the Entrepreneurship boot camp and the Innovation one.

Sincerely, Christian Anker

Completed PhD courses

PhD level

- **BI Norwegian Business School**
  - DRE1010 Doing qualitative research, perspectives, traditions and craft 6 ECTS (Fall 2024)
  - GRA4136 Machine learning for business (Fall 2024)
  - DRE1011 Psycometrics and Multivariate analysis 6 ECTS (Spring 2024)
  - DRE6007 Core issues of research ethics 0 ECTS (Sprng 2024)
  - DRE3008 Perspectives on entrepreneurship and innovation 6 ECTS (Spring 2024)
  - DRE3002 Strategy perspectives 6 ECTS (Fall 2023)
  - DRE1012 Research methodology 6 ECTS (Fall 2023)
  - DRE3004 Foundations of strategy 6 ECTS (Fall 2023)

- **SCANCOR (the Scandinavian Consortium for Organizational Research)**
  - STV9033 The 19th Scancor PhD Workshop on Institutional Analysis 5 ECTS (Fall 2023)
    - Note: SCANCOR is a long-standing academic collaboration that connects Scandinavian universities with Stanford University and Harvard University.

- **Copenhagen Business School (Denmark)**
  - Foundations of Strategy 5 ECTS (Spring 2023)

- **NHH Norwegian School of Economics (Norway)**
  - MET529 Applied Business Analytics 2.5 ECTS (Fall 2024)

- **School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)**
  - Methods of Causal Inference With Panel Data 4 ECTS (Spring 2025)

Researcher CV

Working papers

- Winston Smith, S. & **Anker**, C. (2026). *'CHATGPT, Make Me A Viral Product. Make No Mistakes.': How AI Is Reshaping Venture Financing*. [Working paper]
- Winston Smith, S. & **Anker**, C. (2024). *The Proximity Paradox: Investors, Startups, and Accelerators in a Digital World*. [Working paper]
- Sasson, A. & **Anker**, C. (2023). *Literature Review at the [Generative] AI Era: Substitution, Complementarity and Sensitivities* [Working paper]

Published papers

- **Anker,** C**.** & Helle, P. D. (2022). *Innovation driven strategic shifts through the use of accelerator programs: A comparative study of the global energy sector* [Master's thesis in Master of Science in Business, Strategy, BI Norwegian Business School, 2022. Permanent handle: https://hdl.handle.net/11250/3038595]

Awards and recognitions

- Received SMS 2024 Scholarship

Conferences presented papers at paper track:

- EGOS 2023 (Sardinia, Italy)
- Strategic Management Society (SMS) 2024 (Istanbul, Turkey)
- BI Norwegian Business School Strategy Department Brownbag 2024
- Academy of Management (AOM) 2025 Copenhagen, Denmark
- The Wharton Technology & Innovation Conference 2025 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA)
- Strategic Management Society (SMS) 2025 (San Francisco, USA)
- Nordic Centre for Entrepreneurship Research (NCER) 2025, Goteborg, Sweden
- DRUID 2025 (Toronto, Canada)
- Boston University, Questrom School of Business, S&I Workshop 2026 (Boston, USA)

Workshops

- The 19th Scancor PhD Workshop on Institutional Analysis 2023 (Oslo, Norway)
- SMS 2024 Strategic Management Society Annual Doctoral Workshop 2024 (Istanbul, Turkey)
- SMS 2024 Strategic Management Paper Development Workshop (Istanbul, Turkey)

Teaching experience

BI Norwegian Business School (Org. nr. 971228865), Oslo, Norway
2023-

- **What:** Taught bachelor and master students in Strategy courses, Entrepreneurship courses, Finance course, Data science and Programming courses. Wrote exams and graded multiple choice exams, term papers, and student presentations.
- **Course sole responsible**
    - Master level: Venture finance (65 students, 14 sessions à 90 minutes)

- Class teaching
    - Executive level: Sustainable Energy (40 students)
    - Master level: Data Analysis with STATA (x3) (30-60 students)
    - Master level: New Venture Creation (30 students)
    - Bachelor level: New Venture Creation 2 (30 students)
    - Bachelor level: Strategy 2 (60 students)
    - Bachelor level: Strategy (60 students)
- Teacher Assistant
    - Master level: Venture Finance (x2)
- Pedagogical training:
    - Pedagogical course for university teaching over a few weeks (Doing great teaching)

Startup Mentor
BI Norwegian Business School (Org. nr. 971228865), Oslo, Norway
2023-

- **What:** Mentoring 20 student startup founders in the incubation phase
- Created a small incubator for them and a startup workspace at campus with weekly individual mentoring. Introduced them to the Oslo startup environment (i.e., StartupLab, Mesh, Oslo Innovation Week, active startup founders mv.)

Research Assistant
BI Norwegian Business School (Org. nr. 971228865), Oslo, Norway
2023

- Part-time employed at BI for Professor Amir Sasson. General research work/data scientist work.

Short CV

Professional Experience

Business Owner-Operator

Operating companies:

Company: O.B. Wiik AS (Org. nr. 934 122 224), Oslo, Norway

1994 – 2022

- Ownership responsibilities, strategy, leadership. Revenues of NOK 500+ million, 100+ employees, 100+ countries, HQs in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Canada.
- Founded in 1912, the leading supplier of fabric covered buildings, bulk storage, tents, and tarpaulins in the Nordics and a global UN emergency aid partner (WFP, WHO)
- The family business through five generations. Successfully sold in 2022.
- Part of turnaround operation in 2015 that took multiple years. Also, the 2020 Covid pandemic lockdowns challenging our operations. Part of the successful sale of the business in 2022.

Company: Chr. Anker ENK (Org. nr. 931 032 895), Trysil, Norway

2018 –

- Woodland Owner-Operator, Forest Ranger, and Professional Lumberjack
- Manage a larger woodland in Norway

Capital allocator and Strategist

Investment companies:

Private family investment companies

2007 -

- Investment company with subsidiaries, real estate, stocks. Investing in companies and property and everything else that naturally coincides with this, including participating in other companies with similar activities, buying and selling shares, or otherwise becoming interested in other enterprises
- My role is to allocate capital, assess risk, and find investments

Entrepreneurship

Venture creations:

Several ventures

2019 -

- Creating new ventures and startups. Founding, entrepreneurship through acquisition, buy several small businesses to roll up
- Currently building a solar farm on my property estimated annual generation of ~220 GWh. Running a startup trying to sell industrial machines from China in the Scandinavian market.
- Collaborating with my brothers on their ventures
  - Building the largest AI conference in Scandinavia called AI Mad Lab.
  - Building a digital HR platform that surfaces ideas fra the bottom of organizations to the C-suit to unlock hidden ideas and value.
- Consulting a series of startups ran by friends on business strategy and finances

Charity Experience

Board Member

Company: Det Rivertzske Sameiet (Org. nr. 993 529 346), Norway

2022 –

- I help run a housing collective with 318 apartments and 750+ residents. Managing their finances and make decisions, helping the tenants enjoy the place they live. Leading one full-time employee.
- Elected first time 2022-2023. Second time 2023-2025. Third time 2025-2027.

Company: BI Charity Initiative (Org. nr. 987 713 380), Oslo, Norway

2016 – 2017

- Raised NOK 312.000 that went to build schools and provide education to 55.000+ children in Cambodia in partnership with Save The Children. Led 20+ crew and negotiated deals with companies.

Company: Vestre Aker Frivillighetssentral (Org.nr. 981 091 167), Oslo, Norway

2015 – 2018

- Cared for the elderly through weekly visits, making lunch, and doing activities.

Education

Ph.D., Department of Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation, BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway

2023 – 2027 (in progress)

- **What:** Pursues doctoral studies in *Strategic management* at BI Norwegian Business School. Approved 4 years of PhD funding.
- **Dissertation theme (tentative):** COVID-19 and AI impact on the global startup-, accelerator-, and venture capital industry
- **Supervisors:** Sheryl W. Smith
- **Grades:** GPA 4.20 / ECTS score of **B** (five-point scale).

MSc International Business, Smiths School of Business, Queen's University, Kingston, ON, Canada

2021 – 2022

- Program: #1 in Canada 2025 by FT in Masters in Management. It holds AACSB and EQUIS accreditations
- **Grades:** GPA 3.85 / ECTS score of **A** (four-point scale).

MSc Business, BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway

2020 – 2022

- Program: #1 in Norway 2025 by FT in Masters in Management. BI holds AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA accreditations
- **Grades:** GPA 4.50 / ECTS score of **B** (five-point scale). **Thesis: A**
- **Notable**: Strategy major, Dean's List, the Master Merit Society, the Double Degree program, Siviløkonom title.
- I did two master's degrees in parallel as part of the respected Double Degree program

BSc Business, BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway

2015 – 2020

- Part of a 5-year integrated Master's program (Siviløkonomi)
- I took sabbatical leave in the middle to work

BI Norwegian Business School

12 February, 2026

It is my great pleasure to provide a reference letter on behalf of Christian Anker in his application for the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2026. I truly believe that he would benefit tremendously from the opportunity to participate in this experience, and that he would be an excellent contributor to the cohort.

Christian is a PhD candidate at BI Norwegian Business School, where he has distinguished himself so far and holds a great potential for an academic career in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship. I am his PhD supervisor. His research focuses on strategic innovation within the venture capital industry, studying accelerator programs and startups. He is a quantitative researcher, working creatively with large scale datasets on innovation and entrepreneurship. Throughout his time at BI Norwegian Business School, Christian has demonstrated a strong commitment to independent research. He has had the opportunity to present his work at multiple top conferences in the field, including DRUID, Strategic Management Society, and Academy of Management. He is also adept at synthesizing theories and applying them to real-world scenarios.

I know that Christian has beneafitted greatly from participation in the doctoral workshop at SMS, and I believe the ability to participate in the closely knit, intensive community of the NBER Innovation Boot Camp would be highly beneficial for his professional development. The workshop's interactive nature and its focus on leading edge scholarship in pursuit of academic careers and interacting closely with top faculty align perfectly with the present stage in his doctoral journey. It is an opportunity he undoubtedly will make the most of.

Moreover, Christian has consistently demonstrated qualities that make him a good collaborator with others. His proactive approach to learning, his dedication to research excellence, and his collegial attitude make him a valuable asset to any academic setting. I am confident that he will contribute meaningfully to the discussions and activities of the workshop and benefit greatly from the experience.

I am certain that his participation will not only aid his development but also enrich the boot camp with his insights and contagious enthusiasm. Thank you for considering his application. Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information.

Sincerely,
Sheryl Winston Smith, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, MSc Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Associate Professor, Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship
BI Norwegian Business School
Oslo, Norway